

Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420

M-2, Part XXII
Chapter 6

July 29, 1993

1. Transmitted is a new chapter to Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration Manual M-2, "Clinical Programs," Part XXII, "Recreation Therapy Service," Chapter 6, "VA/Very Special Arts Program."

2. The principal purpose is to establish objectives, policies, and guidelines for integrating the arts into the experiences of veteran patients. This includes:

a. Paragraph 6.01: Defines difference in VA/VSA and the National Veterans Creative Arts Program;

b. Paragraph 6.02: Defines purpose/mission of the VA/VSA;

c. Paragraph 6.03: States policy and objectives;

d. Paragraph 6.04: Cites legislative authority and Memorandum of Understanding;

e. Paragraph 6.05: Defines responsibilities;

f. Paragraph 6.06: Defines reporting and recordkeeping requirements;

g. Paragraph 6.07: Defines funding issues.

3. Filing Instructions

Remove pages

Insert pages

iii

iii through iv

6-i

6-1 through 6-5

4. RESCISSIONS: None.

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Under Secretary for Health

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RESCISSIONS

The following material is rescinded:

1. COMPLETE RESCISSIONS

a. Manual

Part IX, M-1 dated August 14, 1979

b. Interim Issues

II 10-74-25

2. LIMITED RESCISSIONS

The following material is rescinded insofar as it pertains to Recreation Service:

a. Paragraphs

4.08 to part VIII of M-2, change 1

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CHAPTER 6. VA/VERY SPECIAL ARTS PROGRAM

6.01 BACKGROUND

a. Very Special Arts, founded in 1974, is an international, nonprofit corporation dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults with disabilities through programs in the arts.

b. In 1984, VA (Department of Veterans Affairs), in collaboration with Very Special Arts, developed the "Very Special Arts Veterans Project" which was tested in CA, NM, NY, and VA. These early, model programs offered workshops in dance, music, drama, visual arts, and language arts.

c. In 1992, VA formalized plans with Very Special Arts through a Memorandum of Understanding and developed a new program initiative designated to showcase the artistic accomplishments of veterans and increase opportunities for them to participate in the arts. This new program builds on prior cooperative efforts between local VA medical centers, Very Special Arts organizations, and existing Recreation Therapy Service programs.

d. VA/VSA (VA/Very Special Arts) is different from the National Veterans Creative Arts Program in concept and organization; the National Veterans Creative Arts Program, administratively under the direction of Recreation Therapy Service, is a therapeutic program designed to provide a creative self-expressive environment for veteran patients.

6.02 PURPOSE

This chapter defines the mission of VA/VSA (VA/Very Special Arts) Program which is to integrate the arts into the experiences of hospitalized veterans and veterans treated in VA outpatient programs. The VA/VSA Program extends art experiences to veterans in VA medical centers not currently served by activities provided through VA's National Veterans Creative Arts Program.

6.03 POLICY

It is VA policy to develop programs that encourage participation of disabled veterans who are VA patients involved in VA/VSA activities with the following general objectives:

a. Promote rehabilitation and artistic expression. Participation in creative programs provides disabled veterans a forum in which to excel. Striving to achieve creative expression adds value and meaning to everyone's life. For the disabled, it offers a satisfying means of demonstrating to

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others their undiminished human value. Moreover, it provides a model for success in the ongoing challenge of adapting to acquired disabilities.

b. Develop public awareness of veterans' issues relating to health, rehabilitation, and the role of the arts in the recovery process.

c. Increase the artistic community's ability to assist veterans by engaging in activities of VSA's Artists-in-Residence Program.

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6.04 AUTHORITY

a. VA has authority to conduct this program under 38 U.S.C. (United States Code) 1701(3)(C), 1710, 1712, and 7301, which directs VA to provide complete medical and hospital services for eligible veterans, including recreational activities for patients at public or private facilities and under VA's outreach authority (38 U.S.C. 7725(2) and 3116).

b. The VA/VSA Program was established by a Memorandum of Understanding, dated September 11, 1992.

c. VA's association with VSA is subject to annual review. Following review, if the association is to continue, a Memorandum of Understanding must be signed by the Secretary and an authorized Very Special Arts official.

6.05 RESPONSIBILITIES

a. VA is responsible for patient art work lost or damaged due to negligence of VA employees.

b. The Director, Recreation Therapy Service (117G), VA Central Office, is responsible for:

(1) Providing VA/VSA services within the VHA (Veterans Health Administration);

(2) Systematic reviews and appraisals of VA/VSA's program activities;

(3) Establishing CQI (continuous quality improvement) activities. CQI activities will ensure VSA's staff performance achieves desired outcomes. This CQI process encompasses patient care services;

(4) VA/VSA program oversight, includes, but is not limited to, day-to-day operations of the program, quarterly reporting, evaluation, funding (budget issues), and regular contact with VSA regarding program operations;

(5) Approval or disapproval of Artist-in-Residence Program proposals and budgets, which will be submitted annually by VSA. Disapproved proposals will be returned to VSA for changes and/or resubmission. Approved proposals will be sent to the Under Secretary for Health for final approval. If disapproved, the Director will meet with the Under Secretary to discuss concerns and present those concerns to VSA. Approved proposals will be executed;

(6) Providing VSOs (Veterans Service Organizations) the opportunity to fund the gallery exhibit reception for VA patient artists (end of year). If VSOs

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choose not to provide monetary support to this part of the program, Very Special Arts will be given the opportunity to fund this event.

(7) Approval/disapproval of any annual program proposals and budget plans from VSA not specifically identified.

(8) Preparation, distribution, and collection of evaluation forms completed quarterly by the Recreation Therapy Service Chief and medical center Director at designated program sites. Completed evaluations must be submitted to VA Central Office within 5 days following receipt at the medical center;

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(9) Notifying the VA medical center Director of the number and identity of all individuals from VSA to be given WOC (Without Compensation) appointments for their involvement in the site program;

(10) Developing a catalog system (cataloging transported art work) for the VA/VSA program. The catalog system will be provided to each participating medical center's Recreation Therapy Service Chief; and

(11) Supplying VA medical center Directors and other appropriate officials with media packets which include fact sheets on the VA/VSA Artist-in-Residence Program.

c. In conjunction with VSA, the Director, Recreation Therapy Service, is responsible for:

(1) Meeting with VSA regularly to plan activities;

(2) Reviewing program proposals and selecting fieldsites;

(3) Developing selection criteria and identifying and confirming VA employees to select calendar art work;

(4) Developing media presentation (video or slides) for use in VA training meetings;

(5) Preparing an appropriate Program Guide;

(6) Adapting the Very Special Arts Medical School Guide for use in VA facilities;

(7) Implementing an annual media plan, to be shared with Office of Public Affairs;

(8) Conducting ongoing documentation and evaluation of project activities. The Director, Recreation Therapy Service, will develop criteria for evaluating the program;

(9) Developing an evaluation form for current program, i.e., revising existing evaluation form to meet program design. The VSA representative in this joint responsibility will be the Vice President/Assistant Director, National Programs, VSA;

(10) Soliciting patient art work annually for VA/VSA calendar;

(11) Selecting art work for annual VSA Gallery, Washington, DC, exhibit;

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(12) Reviewing and selecting program sites for 2-year intervals; and

(13) Developing the Veteran Patient/Medical School Resident Training Program with VA's designated site program and its medical school affiliate.

(a) Once the initial program has been presented, approval must be given by the medical center Director to proceed.

(b) The Chief, Recreation Therapy Service, in conjunction with VSA field person, will oversee the program for the particular medical facility site.

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d. Participating VA medical center Directors will be responsible for providing the annual program evaluation of VA/VSA's activities at the facility (see Par. 6.06).

e. The Chief, Voluntary Service, at each participating medical facility will develop and process documentation for WOC employees from VSA personnel working at the medical facility with this program.

f. The Chief, Recreation Therapy Service, at each participating medical facility will be responsible for:

(1) Supervising VSA staff who volunteer to serve in an approved assignment. These volunteers will be officially authorized to serve on a "without compensation" basis as RS (regularly scheduled) volunteers when they sign the statement of waiver section on VA Form 10-5390, RS Volunteer Information Card, and provided they have completed VA Form 10-5390, and participated in interview and orientations prescribed by the VA Form 10-5390.

(2) Assisting the veteran in filling out claim forms in case of lost or damaged art work and sending those forms to the District Counsel;

(3) Filing reports of contact on lost or damaged art work and sending a copy to Director, Recreation Therapy Service, VA Central Office;

(4) Confirming that return receipt is attached to all art work; and

(5) Crating the art work for sending to Washington, DC, for the gallery exhibition, and uncrating the art work returned to the patient from the exhibition by way of the medical center.

g. The local District Counsel will assist program site medical centers (if art work is lost or damaged) and follow appropriate steps in processing tort claims for the veteran patient involved.

h. VA is not responsible for:

(1) Framing art as needed for annual exhibit in VSA Gallery. VSA will accomplish this task;

(2) Holding annual exhibit of Veteran Master Artists' work and selected work of Recreation Therapy Service patients. This will be performed by VSA;

(3) Uncrating patient art work received in Washington, DC, for the gallery exhibition and crating and returning patient art work to designated medical centers after the annual VSA Gallery art exhibit for patients. These functions are to be performed by VSA; or

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(4) Direct payment of salaries (or any other form of compensation except benefits available to them as WOC appointees to Artists-in-Residence and/or Master Artists). This aspect of the program will be controlled by VSA.

i. VSA staff who are appointed on a WOC basis at VA medical center's will be appropriately assigned to Recreation Therapy Service in accordance with M-1, Part III, "Voluntary Service Operations." VSA will select as Veteran Master Artists, established and recognized artists to lend their time to VSA in a manner which will enrich the lives of the disabled. Ongoing technical assistance will be available to selected medical center project sites from VSA.

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6.06 REPORTING AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

a. The Director, Recreation Therapy Service, in coordination with VSA, will conduct ongoing documentation and evaluation of project activities.

b. On a quarterly basis, Very Special Arts will give the Director, Recreation Therapy Service, an accounting of the expenditure of all funds provided by VA. The Director, Recreation Therapy Service, will seek the advice of VA accounting personnel and will contact Very Special Arts with questions regarding the document. The Director, Recreation Therapy Service, will also provide a copy of the accounting for the Secretary's review. All funding provided Very Special Arts will be used for expenses essential to carry out the program, in accordance with funding regulations associated with General Post Funds, and with a budget prepared by Very Special Arts and approved in advance by the Director, Recreation Therapy Service.

c. Tort claims filed with local District Counsels as a result of lost or damaged art work must be processed in accordance with established VA guidelines, and copies must be maintained for the record in VA Central Office, Recreation Therapy Service.

6.07 FUNDING

a. The Secretary, Veterans Affairs, shall determine the amount and source of funds to be given to Very Special Arts.

b. VA medical centers shall use existing resources (e.g., VA employees' services and VA space) to support VA/VSA activities.

c. VA medical centers shall not use medical facility funds to acquire additional goods or services on a contract basis for VA/VSA activities.

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